

Staff Congress: At-A-Glance

December 05, 2016

Chair Report: Dr. Scott Niles

Chair Niles didn't have anything new to report, but asked Congress members to let him know if they have ideas for future meeting guests.

Vice-Chair Report: Clarissa Purnell

Vice-Chair Purnell indicated that all items on the portal should be up-to-date.

Staff Salutes

Scott Niles has made the following nominations for Staff Salute:

*I would like to nominate Janet Skidmore for a Staff Salute. Although she recently retired at the end of October, Janet was a true asset to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for 15 years, where she handled administrative duties for the IRB and IACUC. Janet was kind, detail-oriented and hard-working, and will truly be missed in the office!

*The Staff Congress Executive Committee would like to thank the Human Resources Department for their hard work in educating the campus on our health benefits during this year's open enrollment. HR communicated often, and provided several open forum opportunities to help explain the changes to faculty and staff, while working to keep our premiums from seeing a drastic increase.

Thanks to all the HR employees who worked so hard during this year's open enrollment to help make it a success!

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Committee Reports

Benefits & Compensation: Committee Chair Craig Dennis

* **Committee Chair Dennis** had no report.

Credentials & Elections: Committee Chair Lora Pace

* **Committee Chair Pace** informed Staff Congress that the Credentials & Elections committee will meet to discuss making an amendment to the by-laws regarding Representative illness that results in a member exceeding the number of missed meetings. Chair Niles asked for input and it was unanimously decided that an excused work absence should also count as an excused Staff Congress absence.

Staff Issues: Committee Chair Jill McBride

* **Committee Chair McBride** reported that following staff concerns were submitted since the November 2016 meeting:

****CONCERN (submitted 11/16/2016)** by Ollie Floyd**

As I was reading the Staff Congress Newsletter, I was appalled to read the following: “Staff Congress acts as a conduit voicing concerns that are submitted through the anonymous Staff Concerns form on the portal. We merely review the concerns and pass them on to the appropriate personnel for action or review. As a group, Staff Congress has become concerned with the inflammatory and accusatory nature of some submissions and, as a result, has revised the language that appears on the submission form. Staff Congress reserves the right to review and edit submitted concerns for clarity and discard concerns that are inflammatory and/or unprofessional in nature.”

Firstly, Staff Congress is an entity formed to represent the staff (i.e., our voices, our concerns, our questions, our needs, and our interests). How is it then that this entity, who is “supposedly” a representation of the staff at this institution, can decide to “edit” or “discard” any person’s submitted concern for any reason whatsoever. I am very concerned, as a staff person, at the direction that this entity is following as it appears that we “the staff” now have no one to represent the true views that we hold. Furthermore, I am professionally offended that anyone would seek to alter or discard a concern that I feel is important because it does not meet a certain criteria deemed necessary by members of the Staff Congress. Additionally, as it was noted in the above “We merely review the concerns and pass them on to the appropriate personnel for action or review”, why would it even be an issue for anyone sitting on this committee since you are not the person that has to respond.

In essence, you are taking away the voice of the very members that you represent in an attempt to make your service on this committee more comfortable. I am beyond disappointed that this is the body that was chosen to represent me and my voice at Morehead State University.

P.S. I am sending this to my staff representative in case my concern is edited or discarded.

Thank you,
Ollie

RESPONSE from Staff Congress Executive Committee:

Thank you for your concern.

Staff Congress truly strives to represent the interests and concerns of all MSU staff. The changes made to our anonymous staff concerns submission process was done in reaction to the increasing number of submissions made containing accusations directed at specific individuals, hateful and crude language and other inflammatory remarks. This unfortunately is an unintended consequence of an anonymous form. Through these changes, we hope to continue to relay concerns to the appropriate parties for action or review while eliminating the circulation of baseless and incendiary remarks that do not serve the greater good of MSU staff.

In order to be efficient, effective, and respectful in our service to staff through this concerns submission process, Staff Congress as an entity needs to establish and maintain a level of professionalism and decorum. The Executive Committee, along with the Staff Concerns Committee, wants to help build bridges between staff and the upper administration, and maintain open lines of two-way communication by relaying valid and pertinent questions and concerns about our University. As such, we believe that perpetuating such inflammatory statements only serves to hinder progress toward true shared governance. If individuals have concerns or questions of a sensitive nature they wish to submit, we ask that they word their questions in a dignified and mature manner—wording they would not hesitate to put their name on if anonymity was unallowable.

Furthermore, while Staff Congress wants to continue to be a conduit through which all staff may voice their concerns, staff are not required to bring their concerns through this body; it is one of several channels available. Individuals may go to their supervisors or any cabinet member to express concerns. Additionally, the University has implemented an ethics hotline called Red Flag Reporting through which all staff may report concerns anonymously. More information about this service is available here:

[https://my.moreheadstate.edu/EmployeeServices/Procurement/Pages/Ethics-Hotline-\(Red-Flag-Reporting\).aspx](https://my.moreheadstate.edu/EmployeeServices/Procurement/Pages/Ethics-Hotline-(Red-Flag-Reporting).aspx)

****CONCERN (submitted via hard copy)****

Can you please explain what the rule is for hourly employees accumulating extra hours? My understanding is if an employee is taking classes, they can adjust their schedule to make up any time missed due to being in class. But can an employee come in early or stay late to accumulate extra hours to use as vacation time when there is no work to be completed and it is not supervisor approved? I have seen this happen numerous times with employees coming up with days/weeks worth of extra time to use at their (the employees) discretion.

RESPONSE from Harold Nally, Human Resources Director during Staff Congress Executive Council meeting:

Employees are able to bank equivalent time (also known as “EQ time”), with their supervisor’s approval, but additional hours are not able to be banked for use at a later date.

NOTE: All submitted Staff Concerns may be seen in their entirety, along with the corresponding response, on the Staff Congress Portal site. Login to the Portal site, go to Employee Services, select Staff Congress, and then choose the Past Staff Concerns button. There will be a listing by month and year of the Staff Concerns from which you may choose to review.

Sustainability Committee

***Representative Niehoff** reported that MSU was recently designated a Silver level bicycle friendly university by The League of American Bicyclists.

Other Reports

Staff Regent Report: Dr. Shannon Harr

Staff Regent was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted the following report:

The Presidential Search and Screening Advisory Committee met on December 1, 2016 to begin to distill the pool of presidential candidates. With the help of our search firm, Funk and Associates, we were able to narrow the number of candidates to 10. These 10 candidates will be notified of the committee's interest in them, and the committee members will engage in gathering more in depth information about these candidates with the assistance of our search firm. The identity of these individuals will not be made public at this time.

The Presidential Search and Screening Advisory Committee will meet again on January 11, 2017 to continue to narrow the pool of candidates.

Also, there is a BOR meeting on December 7.

Human Resources Report: Harold Nally, Director of Human Resources

Director Nally reported that while MSU officials and the Office of Human Resources are aware of the temporary injunction on the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) by a Texas federal judge, the situation will be closely monitored but no action will be taken at this time.

Benefit enrollment totals were not available at the time of the December meeting. However, Director Nally said he would provide a breakdown of the plan enrollment numbers as soon as they were available. He also indicated that there were still employees who missed the deadline for taking the cotinine test. WellPoints tracking for 2017 will begin on January 1, 2017 and cotinine testing will begin January 3.

A Representative asked why MSU does not offer an HRA to employees who opt out of MSU insurance since it saves the institution money? The response between VP Patrick and Director Nally was that many places actually have higher premiums for spouses that could have been covered by another plan (such as a plan from their own place of employment) so it may not be in the best interest of the employee to opt out.

A Representative noted that the KYRx Coalition provided them with a price quote for the medications they are currently on. However, shortly after receiving the quote from the KYRx Coalition, the same employee received a letter from Anthem stating that one (or more) of the medications that were quoted would no longer be covered in 2017. Are MSU's prescriptions in 2017 going to be covered by Anthem, or by the Coalition? Director Nally said prescriptions would be covered by the Rx Coalition and suggested that the employee contact the Coalition for clarification. He also asked that the employee keep in touch with him so that he knows what happens with the situation should other employees have the same question.

Cabinet Report: Beth Patrick

VP Patrick, in the interest of brevity, provided the following run-down of topics covered in the last Cabinet meeting:

- Health insurance
- WWW. Project
- Ellucian updates
- Phone system replacements

- Gen Ed committee will begin renewing our existing gen ed programs in the Spring
- SACs 5th year report and feedback
- Diversity plan
- Budgeting for 17-18 and the potential impact of the new performance funding
- Early College program and what changes may need to be made due to the new dual enrollment funding
- MSU had a clean audit and our financial review resulted in no change in our debt rating
- Blue Ribbon Task Force is taking a look at our extended campus centers and will provide a report consisting of what is working, what is not working, and things that MSU could change to allow extended campuses to be more successful.

VP Patrick said she would be more than happy to provide a more in depth update on any aforementioned item.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Jason Bentley, VP for Student Success

Dr. Bentley spoke to Staff Congress regarding MSU's current enrollment for Fall 2016 as well as strategic positioning initiatives MSU plans to implement. Below are some of the highlights from his presentation:

- Fall 2016 Early College enrollment was at 2,757, an increase in 258 from Fall 2015.
- Undergraduate enrollment for Fall 2016 was 9,754, while Graduate enrollment was 992.
- The profile of our Fall 2016 FT Freshman cohort:
 - 83.74% were in state students, of which 46.35% were from our service region
 - 1.96% were international students
 - Students had an average ACT score of 22.8
 - Students had an average high school GPA of 3.45
- MSU adjusted financial aid in 2014 and expected a loss of 100 Undergrad students. The actual loss was 172 students, but there was also an unexpected increase in competitor's scholarships at the same time.
- MSU increased recruiting activities in OH. Unfortunately, the OH student population was declining and there was increased competition for students within OH, IL, KY, and IN at the same time.
- MSU adjusted our admission index in 2015 in an effort to help improve progression, retention and graduation rates among those admitted. We were pleased to see that the 300 admits we anticipated to lose was actually only a net reduction of 184.
- MSU followed the Freshman class of 2009 to determine that we fell short of our ASPIRE 4-year graduation target of 25%, coming in at only 20% graduation. However, the Freshman class of 2010 exceeded that goal with a 26% 4-year graduation rate. (IPEDS data)
- Both the 2009 and 2010 classes fell short of our 6-year ASPIRE graduation goal of 54%, coming in at 40% and 46% respectively. (IPEDS data)
- In 2016 MSU had a retention rate of 70%, which was up from 66% in 2015. Even with the increase for 2016, MSU still fell 1-4% below many of our "sister" institutions such as Murray State, ECU, Austin Peay, Marshall, and UT Martin.
- There is a noticeable shift in demographics, with as few as 16% of college students fitting the mold for a "traditional" college student being:
 - 18-22 years old

- Financially dependent on parents and/or family
- Enrolled full-time
- Enrolled in onsite classes
- Living on campus
- There is an increase in historically underrepresented groups in college (such as Hispanics) that has the same financial need as the socio-economic underprivileged Eastern KY students. MSU has positioned ourselves to bring those students in with our lower cost of attendance than other area 4-year institutions.
- Students previously expressed the need for improvements in housing, parking, food services, and technology across campus. MSU is currently making improvements in all these areas with money from student paid fees and auxiliary income sources.
- MSU is committed to our students and to recruiting those who want to further their education at our institution. Some of the main areas we intend to focus on are:
 - Division of Student Success – functional areas will be organized to best support the overall student experience.
 - Enrollment Intelligence – review application and enrollment data to gain insight allowing us to comprise a plan to bring in students who can be successful at our institution.
 - Undergraduate Recruitment – increase marketing in our target markets and leverage financial aid to bring in eligible students who may otherwise not be financially able to attend college.
 - Engagement – be engaged with students once they come to campus. Be sure they are properly advised in their programs. Increase activities and promote student inclusion and leadership development.
 - First College Year – this is the time when the greatest student attrition occurs so make it a great year!

Q/A Session

- Rep. Fletcher asked if MSU has looked at financial aid information to determine what is the “magic” FA amount required to bring students here and carry them to graduation?
 - Dr. Bentley responded that MSU needs to be more involved with students who have financial aid, making sure to track their academic progress not just through final grades but also through midterm scores to catch students who may be at risk for academically losing their funding.
 - Dr. Bentley has also suggested a completion fund to Dr. Andrews. This fund would help students who, due to whatever circumstances, are unable to financially afford their final semester of classes.
- Rep. McBride asked isn’t there more MSU could do to catch students before they withdrawal from school?
 - Dr. Bentley indicated that he has already submitted a workflow to several key members on campus (Michelle Barber and John Ernst included) that would ask students to submit an intent to withdrawal, which would allow MSU to catch these students to see if there is anything that can be done to negate their need to withdrawal.
- Rep. Pace suggested that MSU take a look at our timeline for dropping student schedules. She encountered numerous students this summer who couldn’t get in a First Year Seminar course or English 100 (for example) but then after MSU dropped schedules and opened up seats in those courses, it was too late for other students to enroll.
 - Dr. Bentley responded with “wouldn’t it be great if students could schedule semesters ahead?” which VP Beth Partick indicated is coming. Dr. Bentley also suggested

overloading a course during initial enrollment, allowing for students to drop which would bring the course down to the recommended capacity. Rep. Pace said they already overload courses, but perhaps we need to revisit the numbers and increase the overload on some courses.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

Human Resources is in the process of scheduling Spring 2017 professional development opportunities. The following topics have been identified as potential training topics, but feedback is requested:

Handling Difficult People	14
Conflict Management	12
Negativity in the Workplace	10
Team Building	10
Stress Management	10
Performance Management	10
Supervisory Skills	9
Time Management	7
Negotiation Skills	6
Leadership Skills	6
Motivation	6
Project Management	6
Assertiveness Skills	5
Telephone Skills	5
Coaching and Counseling	5
Managing Change	5
Innovative Thinking	5
Managing Multiple Priorities	5
Cultural Diversity	5
Presentation Skills	5
Position Management	5
Customer Service	4
Interpersonal Skills	4
Solving Team Problems	4
Personnel Policy Interpretation	4
Business/Grant Writing	3
Total Quality Management	3
Listening Skills	2
Communicating on the Web	2
Collaborative Leadership	2

UPCOMING EAGLE EVENTS

- Monday, December 5 – 9: Final examinations.
- Saturday, December 10: Commencement.
- Saturday, December 10: Recreation and Wellness Center will begin winter break hours as follows:
 - Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Natatorium 10 a.m. - 2 p.m./4 p.m. - 6 p.m.)
 - Saturday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Natatorium 10 a.m. – Noon)
 - Sunday 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. (Natatorium 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.)
 - Facility will be closed December 24 – January 1
 - January 2: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Natatorium 10 a.m. - 2 p.m./4 p.m. - 6 p.m.)
- Monday, December 12: Winter session classes begin.
- Monday, December 19 – Monday, January 2: MSU closed for winter break.
- Monday, January 9: Next STAFF CONGRESS meeting Combs Building 413 1:00 p.m.

CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Staff/Faculty are encouraged to participate in intramurals by joining an existing team or starting a new team.
- Don't forget to check www.msueagles.com for upcoming MSU athletic events.
- Cotinine testing and biometric screenings for 2017 begin **January 3, 2017** in Counseling & Health Services! **Please don't wait until the last minute to schedule your test.** Call 3-2123 to schedule your appointment today!

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